

Frances E. Willard House
(Now Woman's Christian Temperance Union)
1730 Chicago Avenue
Evanston
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1095

HABS
ILL,
16-EVAN,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
801 - 19th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ILL-1095

FRANCES E. WILLARD HOUSE
(Now Woman's Christian Temperance Union)HABS
ILL,
16-EVAN,
4-

Location: 1730 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner and Occupant: Woman's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.).

Present Use: Museum of the life and mementoes of Frances E. Willard.

Statement of Significance: This house, the home of Frances E. Willard, crusader for education, abolition of the liquor traffic and the rights of women, was built in 1865 by her father. The building shows the influence of the publications of Andrew Jackson Downing, and is also a good example of the early use of concrete in the foundation walls. The house is especially significant since the W.C.T.U. has faithfully preserved the interior and its furnishings just as Miss Willard left it.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description: south part of lot 16, Block 15 in Evanston, a Subdivision in Section 18 of Township 41, Range 14.

Chain of title, from the Chicago Title and Trust Company, tract book 25-Q and from Ante-fire tract book 341, p. 145: The land on which the Willard House was built was originally the property of John H. Foster which was purchased from him by the Trustees of Northwestern University for the creation of the new campus on August 11, 1853 (Document 45638). The land was subdivided and a village laid out by John Evans and other trustees of the university on July 27, 1854, and the name "Evanston" was given to the town. When the house was built in 1865 and afterwards the land remained in the custody of the university until the lot was finally granted to the widow of Josiah Flint Willard, Mary Tompson Willard, May 15 1872. Mrs. Willard retained possession of the house and on her death in 1892 it passed to Frances Willard. After her death, the house passed to the widow of Oliver Willard, the brother of Frances, Mary Bannister Willard. The National W.C.T.U. bought out Mrs. Mary B. Willard's interest in the home and moved the headquarters from the Temple in Chicago to Evanston, November 4, 1900 (Document 2959480). During

1910 a brick structure was erected on the rear of the Willard property to house the national offices of the W.C.T.U. and the "Rest Cottage," as Miss Willard was fond of calling her home, became a museum, and has served in this function to this date.

2. Date of erection: 1865.
3. Architect: "designed" by Josiah Flint Willard from plates in the books by A. J. Downing in the "English Cottage style."
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Originally the house appears to have consisted of an "L-shaped" unit which is now the far southeast portion of the building. Its vertical board and batten siding and the scroll work determined the form and decoration of the remainder of the building through the course of the nineteenth century. The foundation walls of the original portion of the building were made of a crude type of concrete. It appears that Josiah Willard was acquainted with such "gravel walls" in Milton, Wisconsin, some ten miles from Janesville where the Willards lived before moving to Evanston. If Mr. Willard had not in fact seen such construction before 1853, he probably read of this building technique in Orson Squire Fowler, A Home For All, 1853, since both Mr. Willard and later Frances were very interested in phrenology and Squire's publications. (The book, The Practical Phrenologist by O. S. Fowler and other books of the subject and a white marble head are in Miss Willard's den.) It would appear, then, that through either direct observation or through the dissemination of Fowler, Mr. Willard became aware of the possibilities of the "gravel" or "grout wall" and used this material when building the Evanston home. The exterior surface of the wall above grade was covered with a concrete plaster and scored to represent stone, as suggested by Fowler in A Home For All. For further notes on Fowler and Joseph Goodrich, see Supplemental Information.
5. Alterations and additions: The first major addition was made to the house beginning in April, 1878, approximately one month after the death of Oliver Willard, the brother of Frances. The "annex" as it was called, was to provide a home for Oliver's widow, Mary Bannister Willard and her four children. This addition substantially changed the form and appearance of the original Willard house.

In her address to the W.C.T.U. in 1890, Miss Willard mentions the proceeds from the sale of her autobiography, "Glimpses of Fifty Years." She informed the society that the money had been used for repairs and additions to the "Rest Cottage." It was probably during this year that the large bay windows were added to the east side of the house.

Again in 1893, in her annual report to the W.C.T.U., Miss Willard states that her "den" had been "enlarged and fitted." For this and the previous additions to the house see Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1890 and 1893, p. 119.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated With Building:

Frances Elizabeth Willard 1839-1898 (from Frances Willard House, reprinted from The Union Signal, and Earhart, Mary, Frances Willard).

Miss Willard's parents, Josiah Flint Willard and Mary Tompson Hill were married in the Ogden and Churchville area, New York, in 1831, and made their home in Churchville for some ten years. There four children were born to them, two of whom died in infancy. They took their son Oliver and their daughter Frances, who was born September 28, 1839, to Oberlin, Ohio, in 1841, where both parents studied and attended classes at Oberlin College for some two years. Mrs. Willard was deeply interested in education, for she also taught from the time she was fifteen until she was twenty-six. A daughter Mary was born in Oberlin, where the family lived for five years.

Life in the outdoors was recommended to Josiah Willard because of his ill health. He moved his family by prairie schooner to the territory of Wisconsin to their third home, a beautiful farm on the Rock River in Rock County not far from Janesville. Mr. Willard's health improved and "Forest Home," the Willard house, grew.

When time came for higher education, Oliver was sent to Beloit College; later, Frances and Mary attended Milwaukee Female College. While the girls were enrolled at Milwaukee, Mr. Willard heard about the excellence of Northwestern Female College in Evanston and visited the community to judge both the school and the village. Soon they moved to Evanston and the girls were enrolled in the college on March 2, 1858. "Forest Home" was rented and the Willards moved into their fourth home in Evanston. "Swampscott became our residence--a pleasant place near the lake the large grounds of which became Mr. Willard's pride and pleasure, as he saw them, under his skillful management, growing constantly more beautiful. Nearly every tree and vine was set with his own hands, often assisted by Frank (nickname for Frances), and all were imported from 'Forest Home.'" (Glimpses of Fifty Years, p. 101.)

Frances Willard graduated from Northwestern Female College in 1859 and began a teaching career in Harlem, now Oak Park, and later in Kankakee. When the war broke out in 1861, Oliver began

training for combat, but his company was never sent away. In June, 1862 Mary Willard died, plunging the family into grief. Four weeks later Oliver married Mary Bannister and moved to Denver. Late in the same year, Frances became preceptress of natural sciences at Northwestern Female College, teaching two terms. The next January she went to Pittsburgh Female College, to teach elocution for three terms.

During the late spring or early summer of 1865, "Swampscott" was sold complete with all the family's furnishings, even those brought from New York. The associations of these items with the memory of Mary was too much for Mr. Willard. Then in late autumn, 1865, Josiah Willard built his fifth home "Rest Cottage." He secured an entire block of land from the University on a ninety-nine-year lease at a bargain price but located in what was then a most undesirable location. This was marshland which had been rejected by other Evanstonians as an unhealthy place to live. Mother and daughter were thoroughly dismayed at living in this section of the village, although it was only a block from the university campus. Nevertheless, it was here that Mr. Willard decided to build their new home. He proceeded to have the land cleared of all trees and underbrush and even had the clump of white poplars, which were the only things Frances loved about the place, cut down. For each tree cut down, he announced, he would plant an elm. In December, 1865, they moved into the new cottage on the marshland with all the new furniture he had bought for it. (Glimpses of Fifty Years, p. 188)

While her parents were building the "Rest Cottage," Frances Willard taught in nearby Grove School. At this time also, she became corresponding secretary of the American Methodist Centenary Association. During 1866 and 1867, Miss Willard taught at Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, in Lima, New York, followed by an extended period of travel in Europe, which greatly widened her horizons. A year after her return, in 1871, Miss Willard was selected president of the Evanston College for Ladies, which shortly afterward merged with Northwestern University. For a year Miss Willard was dean of the Woman's College of Northwestern University, then professor of Aesthetics in Northwestern University for a year.

In June 1874, she resigned her academic positions to devote her energies to the temperance crusade which had started six months before. By September, 1874, she was president of the Chicago W.C.T.U., opening a headquarters. Before the close of the year, Miss Willard had become, first, state secretary, and later national corresponding secretary of the W.C.T.U.

When Miss Willard was elected president of the National W.C.T.U. in 1879, an office which she held until her death in 1898, she entered the zenith of her career and influence. In 1883 she founded the World's W.C.T.U.; in 1888 she was co-founder with Susan B. Anthony and May Wright Sewell of the National Council of Women and was its first president. She was one of the first five women to be elected to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She was a member of the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University, 1892-96, and a member of the Board of Lady Commissioners of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.

Among the many, many honors which came to her both during her lifetime and afterward, are these: her statue which stands in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol, the first woman to be thus honored; her bust is included in the New York University Hall of Fame for Great Americans. In 1965 the "Rest Cottage" was designated a Registered National Historic Landmark.

C. Sources:

1. Unpublished material:

Interview with W.C.T.U. officers, 17 August 1967:

Mrs. Herman Stanley, National Promotion Secretary,
Mrs. Lenadell Wiggins, Curator of the Rest Cottage
Museum 1728 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, Illinois.

2. Published material:

Drury, John. Historic Midwest Houses. Minneapolis:
University of Minnesota Press, 1947.

Good short history of the house; three good photographs.

Earhart, Mary. Frances Willard, From Prayers to Politics.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.

A straight-forward account of Miss Willard's life,
with attention to other members of the family.

Fowler, Orson Squire. A Home For All, or, The Gravel Wall
and Octagon Mode of Building. New York, 1853. pp. 12-20.

Discussion of the use of the "gravel wall" or poured
concrete for inexpensive and permanent wall construction.
He mentions the discovery of Mr. Goodrich's buildings in
Janesville, Wisconsin.

Luney, Lillian. "Frances Willard Home Given National Recognition," reprinted from a Willard Issue of The Union Signal,
a journal of social welfare published by the National
Woman's Temperance Union, Evanston, Illinois. 1965 (?).

Reeling, Viola Crouch. Evanston, Its Land and Its People.
Evanston: Daughters of the American Revolution, 1928.
p. 185 ff.

History of the community and the university.

Schmidt, Carl F. The Octagon Fad. Scottsville, N.Y.:
Carl F. Schmidt, 1958.

A history of the use of the octagon form in American
architecture and an account of O. S. Fowler's influence.

Tallmadge, Thomas E. "Architectural History of a Western
Town," American Architect, Vol. 115, No. 2257 (March
26, 1919). pp. 443-451.

An architectural history of Evanston from the earliest
building of the settlers to the date of writing. Brief
mention of the Willard House. See Supplemental In-
formation.

Willard, Frances E. A Classic Town, The Story of Evanston.
Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publishing Association,
1891. pp. 43 ff.

. Glimpses of Fifty Years 1839-1889.
Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publishing Association,
1889. pp. 101, 132, 145, and 188.
An autobiography.

D. Supplemental Information:

From Thomas E. Tallmadge, "Architectural History of a Western
Town," American Architect, Vol. 115, No. 2257 (March 26, 1919),
pp. 443-451. In the article Tallmadge points out that the popu-
lation of Evanston in 1861 was 300 people, so it is quite possible
that the Willards were acquainted with the Old Round House
described below. A photograph of the Old Round House is re-
produced with this caption: "The Old Round House. 1859. Wood
Siding on Concrete Walls." A note on the bottom of the page
expands this.

"A curious eddy in the architectural stream is indicated by
the Old Round House. In 1854 a book was published by Mr.
Orson Squire Fowler called "A Home For All, or The Octagon
Mode of Mode of Building [sic]." The book proved, at
least to the satisfaction of the author, that a house of
circular or octagonal plan not only had the smallest amount
of outside wall space for the area of the enclosed rooms,
but also resulted in a building more conveniently arranged
and more elegant than the prevailing Cottage or 'Doric'
style of building, of which he was especially scornful.
The house in question was built by some theological students

in the University, whose chosen profession did not prevent them from filching a cargo of lumber which had been washed ashore from the wreck of a schooner on the Grosse Point reefs. The building had various vicissitudes--it was moved once the length of the town, much to the discomfort of the moving contractor, who discovered that the supposedly lumber house was in reality concrete covered with siding... The building was torn down in 1889."

Concerning the Willard House, Tallmadge writes:

"There was little building during the war, and what little there was still maintained the traditions of the Classic Revival. Immediately after the war, with the revival of building, came new fashions of many varieties. There was the cottage style, apparently inspired by a style-book issued by Robert [sic.] Downing, with numerous plans and elevations of cozy cottages. Their principal characteristic is the sharp peaked roof, a vertical outside siding, with the joints covered with battens, narrow porches and narrow windows and narrow hallways. The details are ordinarily Gothic, and the style is of course related at least by marriage to the Gothic Revival. A very good example is the Rest Cottage (Willard House), the home of Frances Willard, built in 1866." p. 444.

From Carl F. Schmidt, The Octagon Fad (Scottsville, N.Y.: Carl F. Schmidt, 1958).

Orson Squire Fowler--1809-1879 or 89. Fowler was born in Cohocton, New York. His education was in theology at Amherst; while there he went to Boston to hear lectures on Phrenology by an Austrian scientist. This subject soon consumed his entire interest so that on graduating in 1834 he turned from theology to phrenology. His practice and lectures took him to New York where, with the help of his brother, Lorenzo, and his sister, Charlotte, he opened an office. Fowler built up a tremendous business, touring the country and lecturing. Soon he considered building a house with his growing fortune. With his characteristic curiosity and thoroughness he investigated the subject of house construction, his conclusions lead to the publication in 1849 of the first edition of "A Home For All." His home near Fishkill, New York, began to rise in 1848. In the 1853 edition he incorporated the description of Milton, Wisconsin, with his enthusiastic endorsement of the "gravel" or "grout wall."

Joseph Goodrich, "who came from Alleghany County, in New York State, began the construction of a combined residence, store and tavern building in Old Milton (Wisconsin) about 1844....

(The original building consisted of a) three story hexagonal building which forms the end of a long two story wing. Each side of the hexagon is twenty feet long. It was completed in 1845. In the construction of the building Goodrich used sand, gravel and stones and cement (mixed thoroughly) wet, tamped into forms to construct the walls. The cement was hauled from New York by wagon. Records indicate that it was Portland Cement, imported from England. This, then, constitutes the earliest uses of concrete in this country."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The house is an example of Carpenter Gothic architecture with its jigsaw-cut barge boards in scroll design, its cusped porch brackets, and board and batten exterior siding.
2. Condition of fabric: The concrete foundation walls are in very poor condition, but other foundation walls and the rest of the fabric are in good condition. (See "Foundations and Cellar" below.)

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: Two.
2. Over-all dimensions: About 61' wide (across the front) by 60' deep (front to back).
3. Layout, shape: "U"-shaped.
4. Foundations and cellar: Brick at rear and at the rear portions of the north and south walls. The remainder of the north and south walls and the front of the foundation wall is plastered and scored to imitate ashlar masonry. Under part of the front portion of the building (under the southeast parlor, the center parlor and the dining room) the foundation walls are of concrete. These walls are 6'-5" high and their inner surface shows gravel aggregate of rounded stones mostly from 1/4" to 1/2" size. Spaces around the aggregate allow the form of the stones to be clearly defined. The upper part of the wall is sound, but the lowest and the aggregate cannot be loosened with one's fingers. The lowest 13" to 15" of the wall, however, crumbles at the slightest touch. The cellar floor is four feet approximately below the exterior grade, and it would appear that the cement has leached out

from dampness or flooding. It is likely that the concrete was made with gravel and sand with lime mortar, the "gravel concrete" that Orson Squire Fowler saw used near Jaynesville, Wisconsin in 1850 and which he wrote about in his book A Home For All in 1853. The rest of the foundation walls are of brick and appear sound.

5. Wall construction, finish and color: Walls are board and batten, with battens generally 10" on center, although there is considerable variation in batten spacing, as there is in the size and cross section of the battens themselves. Those on the front of the building are 2" wide at the back and about 1-1/2" wide at the front face; they are 1" thick. The boards and the battens have a smooth finish and are painted a medium grey. The trim is painted white.
6. Structural framing: The floor of the first floor is framed in wood joists. The rest of the framing is wood. The walls are enclosed, so that it was not possible to see the framing. The first floor joists rest on the foundation walls.
7. Porches, stoops: The front (south) porch floors are of tongue and groove wood, painted. The porch columns are octagonal at the southern most front porch and turned at the other porch. The ballusters are turned for both. The four porches at the rear are plain, with wood steps, floors and railings.
8. Chimneys: Brick, unpainted.
9. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The south front door is double set in a paneled reveal. Each leaf of the door has two panels, the upper one arched. There is a transom above this door of stained and clear glass in lead comes. The clear glass has rounded projections or crystallike faucets.
 - b. Windows: In general, the windows are double-hung with the cross bar at mid height and no mutins. Two, however, have large fixed panes and transoms.
10. Roof: shape, covering: The three gables on the east side and the one on the south have pierced and cusped barge boards of wood. At the ridge of each of these gables there is a turned finial that extends some distance both above the ridge of the roof and below the lower intersection of the barge boards.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. General: The plan is approximately a "U" in shape, with the open part facing the rear of the lot, that is, the west. The north leg of the "U" represents an addition to the house, which, although connecting with the original portion, is complete in itself.
 - b. First floor: The original portion of the house contains, in the south leg of the "U", a parlor in the front, a kitchen behind the parlor, and a bedroom behind the kitchen. One enters this part of the house from the south in a central hall, to the left of which is the parlor and to the right of which is a family sitting room (facing south) and a dining room (facing west). A stairway is opposite the front door. In the north leg of the "U" are, from the front to the rear, two connecting parlors, a dining room, and a kitchen. There is a separate porch and central hall entrance for this part of the house, to the south of the parlor. This entrance hall connects to the south with the family sitting room of the original house. A stairway is opposite the front door.
 - c. Second floor: At the rear of the south leg of the "U" is a large study, and at the rear of the center part of the "U" is an upstairs sitting room. At the rear of the north leg of the "U" is a kitchen. The remaining portions of the second floor are occupied by bedrooms and two bathrooms. The north leg of the "U" is complete and can be used separately from the original part of the house, although it has a cross connection with the original house through the upstairs sitting room.
2. Stairways: The south stairway has turned balusters and a turned newel. The north one has a slightly tapered newel, square in cross section, and a balustrade that is constructed of tongue-and-grooved wood strips, alternating boards being of oak and walnut. The newel also contains both woods.
3. Flooring: Much of the floor is covered by wall-to-wall carpeting. The north front entry has a floor of alternating strips of oak and walnut, matching the balustrade. The second floor study has oak strip flooring. All doors have thresholds, painted, which appear from their dented conditions to be softwood. Resilient flooring is used in the kitchen and bathrooms.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: In general, the walls are wall-papered and the ceilings have exposed, smooth-finished plaster.
5. Doorways and trim: In the north leg of the "U" the door trim is of reeded pattern with square blocks bearing a circular design replacing a mitered joint, a clear finish showing the softwood on the first floor and paint concealing the wood on the second floor. The patterning of the reeding is not identical in all of the rooms. In the rest of the house the door trim is of a wide, flat shape with a deeply rounded molding at its outer edges. In the dining room of the original part of the house the trim is finished in clear finish and is seen to be oak. Paint conceals the wood elsewhere, except that in the second floor study the trim is similar to that in the dining room of the north part of the house both in material and finish.

Doors are four paneled throughout, differing only slightly in molding profiles at the north part of the house.

6. Decorative features and trim: The front parlor at the south corner of the house has an elaborate mantel and fireplace front of white marble, and the front parlor at the north corner of the house has a simple mantel and fireplace surround of oak with peculiar incised designs. A built-in buffet in the dining room at the center of the house has glass doors with clear glass and leaded came including a sunburst design. A wainscot of plaster with scored swirl patterns occurs on the dining room wall. The chair rail at the top of the wainscot is of oak with an applied band of metal in floral design.
7. Notable Hardware: None.
8. Lighting, type of fixtures: Lighting is now electric. The fixtures in the principal rooms are chandeliers having many globes on curving stems and glass shades.
9. Heating: Originally heating was by means of fireplaces and stoves, but is now by means of radiators and a central boiler.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: As mentioned, the front of the building faces east, and the front lines up with that of the neighboring houses. A parking lot now occupies the opposite side of the street, but all of the remaining houses

on this block of Chicago Avenue, except the one on the south corner, are of similar wood construction and appear to have been built within roughly ten to fifteen years before or after the Willard house. The house at 1714 bears a plaque giving its construction date as 1854 and noting it as the first house to be built within the platted limits of the city of Evanston. There are three or four similar houses on the next block to the north. The block to the south is commercial and relates to the main business district of Evanston. Northwestern University is immediately to the east. Some of the old wooden houses in the vicinity are owned by the university or by organizations related to campus activities.

2. Outbuildings: The rear of the lot is occupied by the National Headquarters of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, a large, two-story brick structure.
3. Landscaping and walks: Conventional, carefully attended, and in character with the house.

Prepared by Wesley Shank
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The records of this structure were made during the 1967 Chicago IV Project. This was the fourth in a series of summer projects designed to record the significant architecture of the Chicago area. The project was sponsored by the late Mr. Earl J. Reed, FAIA. He was assisted by John R. Fugard, FAIA, Treasurer, and Miss Agnes E. Hodges of the Chicago Chapter Foundation, and a Selection Committee consisting of James Arkin, AIA; Ruth Schoneman, Art Institute of Chicago; and J. Carson Webster, Northwestern University. Organizations cooperating with HABS in this project were: The Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; the Chicago Chapter Foundation; the Chicago Community Trust; the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies; the Illinois Arts Council; and the Chicago Heritage Committee. The Council also made funds available for a State-wide Inventory Project with out-of-Chicago architects cooperating. Quarters were provided at Glessner House through the Chicago School of Architecture Foundation.

Mr. James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey, was in over-all charge of HABS summer programs. The Project Supervisor was Wesley Shank, Iowa State University. Other members of the summer team were: Historian, Leland Roth, University of Illinois, Urbana; Photographer, Philip Turner; Secretary, Mrs. Burt Schloss; and Student Assistant Architects: Keleal Nassin, Tulane University; Maurice Griffin, Illinois Institute of Technology; Allan Steenhusen and David Vyverberg, Iowa State University.